

Prof. Frazer offered the following resolution :

WHEREAS, The prosecution of certain lines of original research simultaneously by a number of able observers has led to confusion as to the authors of specific names to whom the merit of discovery should be assigned, and

WHEREAS, There seems to be a difference of understanding the term publication, and

WHEREAS, It is earnestly desired by the workers in the above-mentioned fields that the date allowed to a description of a species should be as soon as possible after the discovery which that description implies, therefore

Resolved, That this Society will accept as the date of the discovery of a species the date at which a careful and comprehensive abstract of such discovery or discoveries shall have been published in any public journal or magazine,

Provided, That the terms of the abstract shall sharply and distinctly define what has been discovered, and how far these discoveries may be considered by their author to affect scientific questions, and

Provided, That no additions or modifications of such abstract be permitted.

On motion, the above preamble and resolution were referred to the Secretaries.

And the Society was adjourned.

Stated Meeting, December 7, 1877.

Present, 11 members.

Vice-President Mr. FRALEY in the Chair.

Letters of acknowledgment were received from the R. S. New S. Wales, Sydney, October 12 (96); K. K. Geol. R. Vienna, November 4 (99); Royal Ast. S., London, November 12 (99); Radcliffe Observatory, Oxford, October 4 (99); and Dr. Siemens, Westminster, S. W. London, September 27 (97, 98, 99).

Letters of envoy were received from the K. K. Hoffbuchhandlung, Wien, Graben 27, October 30, asking exchanges; N. Gesell, Freiberg i. B. August 8; the Batavian Society, Rotterdam, May, 1877; and the Holland Society at Harlem.

Donations for the Library were received from Mr. John

Tebbut, Sydney ; K. K. G. R. Vienna ; K. K. Hof, Vienna : K. P. Acad., and D. Geol. G. Berlin ; Meteor. Obs., Dorpat ; the Societies at Halle, Freiberg i. B., Harlem, Rotterdam and Leeds ; R. Institute at Venice ; *Révue Politique* ; London Nature ; R. Asiatic Society ; R. Geog. Society ; Met. Com. R. S. ; Yale College ; College of Pharmacy ; and E. D. Cope ; U. S. Coast Survey ; Mexican Observatory ; and Editors of *Gazeta Cientifica* at Venezuela, Caraccas.

Mr. Price continued the reading of his paper on Sylviculture.

Mr. Blasius read a communication on the cause of the loss of the U. S. ship *Huron*. See page 212.

Mr. Blasius postponed the reading of another paper, entitled "Modern Meteorological Method" to the next meeting.

The Treasurer's Annual Report was read.

Pending nominations Nos. 840 to 850 were read.

The following Report of the Secretaries on Prof. Frazer's Resolutions was read :

"The Secretaries having considered the Resolution offered by Prof. Frazer, November 16, 1877, respectfully report that in their opinion the action of the Society at a recent meeting, ordering the Secretaries to cause the date of each paper published in the Proceedings to be printed at the foot of the page, is sufficient for all purposes respecting the right of priority to authors of said papers and that no further action need be taken by the Society.

In explanation of this report a letter from Dr. LeConte was read, referring to the printed Rules of Nomenclature adopted by the Entomological Club, Cambridge, July 3, 1877, and papers by Dr. LeConte published in the *Canadian Entomologist*, October, 1874, and November, 1874, entitled "On some changes in the Nomenclature of North American Coleoptera," &c., and "On Entomological Nomenclature."

The consideration of the subject was, in Prof. Frazer's absence, postponed to the next meeting.

The following is the text of the letter :

Illness prevents me from being present at the meeting of the Society this evening, and I must therefore write what I wish to say in favor of the report of the Secretaries upon the resolutions offered by Prof. Frazer, at the last meeting.

The definition of what constituted a proper publication of a generic or

specific description of an organic form is a question which concerns naturalists alone (i. e. botanists and zoologists), and is not properly a subject to be dealt with by any other class of men of science.

It is, moreover, a question to be determined in the interests and convenience of science alone, and in such manner as to promote its progress by investigators, without reference to the supposed honor of discovery, personal property in the name, or any other of the selfish generalities, under which bad and hasty work are too often covered, and subsequently excused.

The subject has occupied the serious attention of the most eminent naturalists in all countries for many years, and there is likely to be with patience and mutual forbearance among the extremists, an accord of feeling, to be arrived at within a short time.

To show the extremely cautious manner in which it has been approached by societies and persons devoted exclusively to but a single branch of zoology I append the report of a committee of the entomologists of the United States and Canada upon nomenclature, which has progressed to its present form only after two years of active correspondence and consultation. The Secretary will have the kindness to read the appropriate portion of the report. I send too a copy of a short essay by myself, asking attention to a marked passage on p. 205, as embodying in a condensed form my convictions of the motives with which every investigator in science should labor for the best interests of the department of knowledge he has chosen.

"*It is the privilege*, with the facilities for publication now afforded by learned societies, of every careful observer of nature to contribute valuable material for the progress of the branch of science which he is capable of cultivating. *It is his duty* to put his contributions to knowledge in such a form as to be most easily available to his brothers in science. Whether his name remains connected permanently with his observation or not is a matter of small importance; he has done his duty in increasing the power of work of his colleagues."—*Canadian Naturalist*, p. 205.

For these reasons and for many others, which I might specify if time permitted, I think it would be most inexpedient for the Society to express an opinion upon what may constitute a proper scientific publication of supposed new genera and species.

J. L. LECONTE, *Secretary*.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 7, 1877.

P. S.—I have received within a few days a pamphlet from Mr. J. Putzeys, of Brussels, which exemplifies both his courtesy to other investigators in the same field, but also the care with which European Societies will guard any attempt to take advantage of the facilities for publication afforded by them. The pamphlet in question is a laborious and conscientious monograph, containing descriptions of one hundred and eleven species, of which 66 are new. This memoir *is to be* published in the *Stettiner Entomologische Zeitung* for 1878, and the separata of the author, though in his hands for distribution before the middle of November, 1877, bears the same date,

1878. Let this most venerable and time-honored Society err, if there be error, rather on the side of courtesy, than sanction in the slightest degree indecent struggles for priority in giving names to but partially recognized and vaguely studied objects.

The Secretaries reported the following form of advertisement ordered by the Society :

“The American Philosophical Society hereby offer a premium of five hundred dollars for the best successful process by which Anthracite Coal Dust may be economically utilized, the said premium to be competed for and awarded after due examination and report by a Committee appointed for the purpose. Applicants for this premium are requested to file with this Society, within three months, the proofs : 1st of the originality of their inventions, and 2d, of the successful practical working of these inventions. All applications to be sent to the Hall of the A. P. S., 104 South Fifth street, Philadelphia.”

“J. P. LESLEY.”

This advertisement was, on motion of Mr. Price, adopted and ordered to be published once a week for four weeks in the *Scientific American*.

On motion of Mr. Price it was

Resolved, That 1000 extra copies of the address on Sylviculture be printed for distribution, out of the Michaux income.

On motion of Mr. Price it was

Resolved, That \$40 be appropriated out of the Michaux income to purchase a copy of Michaux & Nuttall's *American Sylva* for Fairmount Park Library to be presented to the Commissioners of Fairmount Park for the use of the Landscape Gardener.

And the meeting was adjourned.

Stated Meeting, December 21, 1877.

Present, 18 members.

Vice-President, MR. FRALEY, in the Chair.

Mr. H. Phillips, Jr., a newly elected member, was introduced to the presiding officer and took his seat.

Letters of acknowledgment were received from the Vienna Geographical Society, Nov. 22 (97); Physical Society at Geneva, Sept. 15 (96, 97, 98); Central Bureau of